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Don Ryan Center for Innovation Welcomes Three More Innovators Twelve Innovators, From Web-Design to Construction Systems, Now Populate the Business Incubator

Three new innovative companies, CERAS System, U Fixit and Center for Medical Excellence, have joined the Don Ryan Center for Innovation. This is the Center's newest class of innovators.

"When we started the Center, we knew Bluffton was full of creative minds. Now, a year later, we have more start-up businesses in our back yards than we ever dreamed," Mayor Lisa Sulka said.

"The Don Ryan Center for Innovation is creating a new knowledge-based dynamic to Bluffton's economy," Sulka said. "We are proud to welcome these new companies to the Don Ryan Center. Helping them succeed in the marketplace, also helps Bluffton succeed."

CERAS System:

CERAS System, created by Bluffton resident David Sklar, is an easy-to-assemble, eco-friendly building construction system which produces no waste. A self-described, "eco-tect," Sklar said he is an eco-friendly architect. His system, CERAS, is an acronym for Clean Energy Rapid Assembly Structure.

According to Sklar, the CERAS System can be assembled without power on virtually any site which no special training using the most basic hand tools.

Sklar said all of the components of the CERAS System are pre-measured, pre-cut and pre-drilled and are ready to connect together.

CERAS Systems plans to introduce small CERAS kits locally in the coming months.

U-Fixit (Note: Fixit is one word):

Bluffton resident Robinson York wants to build a brand of do-it-yourself automotive and engine repair facilities. York said his concept addresses the significant gap between self and full-service auto repair by providing “do-it-yourself” customers access to a complete array of tools, equipment and a place to work. Customers will rent bay time. York said this is the only true alternative to full service repair.

The U-Fixit concept enables do-it-yourselfers to perform simple to complex repairs under the supervision of an Automotive Service Excellence (ASE)-certified mechanic.

U-Fixit facilities will give repair enthusiasts, who otherwise would not have place to work, a facility to work on their motorized vehicles such as motorcycles, golf carts, snowmobiles and boats in addition to their automobiles.

“A U-Fixit facility will mirror a full-service shop while allowing repair enthusiasts to save 50% or more on their repairs by saving on parts and labor costs,” York said.

“This business will specifically met the needs of do-it-yourself hobbyists desiring to do more work however don’t have access to more sophisticated tools or supporting infrastructure.

“The full-service self-repair concept is in its infancy; however the \$80 billion auto repair industry is ripe for penetration with this concept, especially in this economic environment.”

York said he is currently seeking venture capital.

Center For Medical Excellence:

The Center for Medical Excellence (CME) is a consulting service and medical management company working with professional practices to enhance their ability to deliver quality patient services, improve patient outcomes/satisfaction and thus, increase operational efficiencies while assuring increased revenues and compliance management.

CME provides consulting services and technology solutions to medical, dental and veterinarian practices.

The three partners of the Center are:

- Dr. Frank Bowen, M.D.(Former Director of Volunteers In Medicine/Hilton Head Island)
- Al Bischoff, SPHR (Senior Professional of Human Resources)
- Tom Conner, Ph.D., SPHR (President, Path-Finder & Former Superintendent of Education, Washington School District, PA.)

“Medical professional are trained to diagnose, treat and heal patients,” Al Bischoff, a partner with Center for Medical Excellence, said. “Many small and medium-size practices do not have the resources to learn and support all of the new regulations, compliance issues and business management techniques.

“We offer these professional practices support to help them be more efficient, improve patient satisfaction while improving the bottom line of the practice.”

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Reference Notes

About The Don Ryan Center For Innovation:

The Don Ryan Center for Innovation is a public-private partnership between the Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development, Care Core National and the Town of Bluffton. The Center’s mission is to advance regional economic development by offering a technology incubator program that provides the resources entrepreneurs, inventors and small business people need to assist them in their quest for success.

The Center offers space, resources and links participants to support in intellectual property, technology evaluation, and product development services as well as seed financing, business mentorships, corporate relationships and hands-on consulting support.

Located in the May River Technology Park at Buckwalter Place in Bluffton, the Don Ryan Center for Innovation is the catalyst innovators need to make their concept a reality.

The Don Ryan Center for Innovation is supported by the Town of Bluffton, Clemson University’s Institute for Economic and Community Development, CareCore National and Buckwalter Tech Park along with additional private sponsors including: St. Joseph’s/Candler, Nexsen Pruet, Regions Bank and Hargray Communications. Other sponsors are Bank of America, McNair Law Firm, Custom Audio Video, WebsterRogers LLP and BFG Communications.

This 501(c) (3) community-driven organization reports to an experienced seven-member board appointed by the Town Council of Bluffton that works in cooperation with Clemson University’s Institute for Economic and Community Development to create, accelerate, expand and incubate jobs for our region. Known as a “Clemson Technology Village,” this program is currently exclusive to Bluffton and Hartsville, with plans to expand to other rural communities throughout South Carolina.

About the Clemson Technology Village:

The Clemson Technology Village is a Clemson University sponsored program designed to support new technology company formation and development in non-metropolitans areas of South Carolina. This program connects communities to intellectual property, technology evaluation, product development services, seed financing, business mentorship, corporate relationships and recruiting. The program employs the following three fundamental elements:

- Community-owned and staffed business incubators.
- The Regional Entrepreneurial Development Center (REDC) housed at the Sandhill Research and Education Center in Columbia and staffed by commercialization professionals located within the Clemson Institute for Economic and Community Development.
- The Innovation Network, a web ware program designed by Clemson University providing programs for supporting community consultants and emerging companies.

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